

## **Chalkboard**

By

**Judy Winslett-Gentry High School Principal**

The State of the Union is an annual address in which the President of the United States reports on the status of the country, normally to a joint session of Congress. In the State of the Union the President traditionally outlines the administration's accomplishments over the previous year, as well as the agenda for the coming year.

I am very excited to have the opportunity to be employed as the principal of Gentry High School for the 2007-08 school year and would like to share the "State of Gentry High School" with the *Chalkboard* readers this week. Gentry High School has a student enrollment of 468, employs 36 certified teachers and 14 classified employees. Each and every one of them play a vital role in educating our students in the areas of academics and citizenship, attempting to prepare them for life after high school.

Gentry High School provides multiple opportunities for students to take advanced coursework. We have Advanced Placement classes in the area of English, math, science and social studies. Students completing the coursework and scoring well on the AP exam could be eligible for three to six hours of college credit, depending on the college in which they enroll. Through the GHS Distance Learning Lab both college classes and high school classes are transmitted from other campuses. This allows our students to enroll in a greater variety of coursework. Composition I & II, Finite Math, College Algebra and US History are transmitted from Northwest Arkansas Community College, along with high school classes in French, Sports Marketing, Fashion Merchandising, Travel and Tourism coming to us from Maumelle, Arkansas. Students choosing to enroll in the college classes could earn up to 18 college credits before every graduating from GHS.

Another welcomed addition to our curriculum this year has been course offerings from the Regional Technology Center. The Gentry School District has provided classroom space for RTC to offer several vocational classes, expanding what we already offer in the vocational areas of business, agriculture, industrial arts and family and consumer science. This new program offers classes in medical professions, criminal justice, law enforcement, aviation, pre-engineering and electrical apprenticeship. GHS has 34 students enrolled in these classes, taking advantage of this great opportunity.

Having the ability to read well in an essential part of being academically successful. GHS was able to purchase, with the help of grant money, the Reading Plus software. This software is currently being utilized in the English III lab and will be made available to all of the English classes by the end of the semester. This program is designed to increase reading speed without losses in comprehension. Several students have already experienced reading level gains in only a short time.

We recently held our Fall Parent/Teacher conferences and are very grateful to all that attended. Several parents and students expressed an interest in a tutoring program to assist those students experiencing difficulty in an academic area. We are currently working on organizing a program, which would make these services available during lunch and after school. Anyone interested in participating in this program should contact the high school counselor.

In addition to these programs GHS has acquired classroom performance systems which have been installed in all math and social studies classrooms, along with the Spanish and agriculture classrooms. The system provides an opportunity for student interaction, giving the teacher immediate feedback. Students enter a response through a keypad assigned to them. With a push of the button, teachers are provided data on student understanding or misunderstanding. This provides both the teacher and students with specific knowledge of results with regard to student understanding of concepts being taught.

Space does not allow me to continue sharing all the great things that are taking place at Gentry High School. We would however encourage and invite you to attend any and all of the parent involvement opportunities to learn more about the “State of Gentry High School”.